

REMARKS

This application has been carefully reviewed in light of the Office Action dated April 28, 2004. Claims 1 to 100 remain in the application, of which Claims 1, 2, 22 to 25, 45 to 47, 49 to 53, 56, 58, 59, 61, 68, 71 to 73, 79, 81, 85 and 86 are independent. Reconsideration and further examination are respectfully requested.

Claim 4 was objected to. The objection is traversed since the claim is clear on its face that the term “number of a party” refers to a facsimile or telephone number of a party, and not to a plurality of parties as alleged in the Office Action. Nonetheless, Claim 4 has been amended as recited above to make the subject matter even clearer. Accordingly, withdrawal of the objection to Claim 4 is respectfully requested.

Claims 3, 9, 10, 18, 26, 32, 33, 53, 56, 58, 59, 65, 76 and 88 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph. More specifically, the term “a common image data format standard” was alleged to be unclear. The term has been amended to make it even clearer that the image data attached to the electronic mail data is in a baseline image data format standard. For example, as defined in the specification at page 6, lines 11 to 16, page 62, lines 7 to 15, the baseline image data format standard may be a standard resolution or A4 size, or an MH coding system considered to be essential of functional information defined by ITU-T T.30, by which a resolution in a main scan direction is 8 pels/mm, a resolution in a sub-scan direction is 3.85 lines/mm, and an original width is 208 mm of A4 size. Thus, Applicant submits that the claims are clear, both on their face and when read in light of the specification. Accordingly, withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

Claims 18 was also rejected for the term “switched on the basis of” allegedly being unclear. Regarding Claim 18, Applicant submits that the term “switched on the basis of” is not ambiguous since it is clear from the claim that, when an address of the other party is input, the information displayed on the display is switched based on the functional information relating to the input address contained in the database. Thus, Claim 18 is believed to be clear. Nonetheless, the language in question of Claim 18 has been rearranged merely to make it even clearer. In view of the foregoing, withdrawal of all of the § 112 rejections is respectfully requested.

Claims 1 to 4, 7 to 15, 25 to 27, 30 to 38, 42, 43, 45, 47, 49, 51 to 67, 72, 82, 84 and 86 to 100 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over U.S. Patent No. 6,600,750 (Joffe) in view of allegedly admitted prior art, Claims 5, 6, 22, 28 and 29 were rejected under § 103(a) over Joffe in view of allegedly admitted prior art and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,124,947 (Seo), Claims 16 to 20, 23, 24, 39 to 41, 46, 50, 68 to 71, 73 to 81, 83 and 85 were rejected under § 103(a) over Joffe in view of allegedly admitted prior art and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,356,356 (Miller), and Claims 21 and 44 were rejected under § 103(a) over Joffe in view of allegedly admitted prior art and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,535,303 (Wolf). Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections are respectfully requested.

The present invention relates to communication between facsimile machines that can transmit/receive e-mail in which image data is attached to the e-mail in a facsimile format. In one aspect, the present invention performs communication pertaining to functional information, which is functional information for a facsimile defined by a Tagged Image File Format (TIFF), in addition to communication of the electronic mail data having

facsimile-format image data attached thereto. For example, as described at page 59, lines 17 to 24 of the specification, functional information may be included in a TIFF file attached to email such that an email message which includes the functional information TIFF file is transmitted to communication the functional information. As a result, the e-mail message includes the functional information so that the receiving device can confirm that the facsimile document can be processed properly.

With specific reference to the claims, Claim 1 is a communication apparatus comprising means for transmitting/receiving electronic mail data by connecting to the Internet, and means for communicating the electronic mail data with facsimile-format image data attached thereto by performing communication pertaining to functional information, which is functional information for a facsimile defined by a Tagged Image File Format (TIFF), in addition to the communication of the electronic mail data.

Claims 51 and 52 are method and computer-readable medium claims, respectively, that substantially correspond to Claim 1.

Claim 2 includes features along the lines of Claim 1, but more specifically is a communication apparatus comprising first connecting means for connecting to a local area network and/or second connecting means for connecting to a wide area network, first communicating means for transmitting/receiving electronic mail data by connecting to the Internet by one of the first and second connecting means, and second communicating means for performing facsimile communication by connecting to the wide area network by the second connecting means, wherein communication concerning functional information, which is functional information for a facsimile defined by a Tagged Image File Format

(TIFF), is performed when said first communicating means communicates electronic mail data having image data attached.

Claim 25 is a computer-readable storage medium claim that substantially corresponds to Claim 2.

The applied art, alone or in any permissible combination, is not seen to disclose or to suggest the features of independent Claims 1, 2, 25, 51 and 52. More particularly, the applied art is not seen to disclose or to suggest at least the feature of performing communication concerning functional information, which is functional information for a facsimile defined by a Tagged Image File Format (TIFF), in addition to communication of electronic mail data having image data attached, or when communicating electronic mail data having image data attached.

Joffe is merely seen to disclose that an e-mail message having a TIFF fax document attached is sent over a network to a mail server. The e-mail message is sent by the mail server to an edge router that transforms the e-mail into a fax message by parsing out the e-mail contents of the message, processing the TIFF file, and transmitting the TIFF file over a PSTN to a receiving fax machine. Thus, Joffe merely transmits an e-mail with a TIFF file attached to a mail server and an edge router, but Applicant fails to see where the email includes a TIFF file of functional information such that communication of functional information, which is functional information for a facsimile defined by a Tagged Image File Format (TIFF), is performed in addition to communication of electronic mail data having image data attached.

With regard to the allegedly admitted prior art, the description provided at page 1, line 13 to page 3, line 20 of the specification specifically states that, for example,

G3 type facsimile machines exchange functional information prior to the transmission of a document between machines. Thus, while facsimile machines have been known to exchange functional information, as clearly described in the specification, “[i]n communication apparatuses for communicating e-mail data, however, no means for exchanging information pertaining to such facsimile functional information is defined.” As a result, if a facsimile image is attached to an email in a format different from the facsimile machine that it is to be printed on, it is unknown to the sender whether the image has been processed properly. Moreover, nothing in the allegedly admitted prior art communicates functional information defined by a TIFF. Accordingly, the present invention would not have been obvious over Joffe or the allegedly admitted prior art, and therefore, withdrawal of the rejections is respectfully requested.

In view of the foregoing deficiencies of the applied art, Claims 1, 2, 25, 51 and 52, as well as the claims dependent therefrom, are believed to be allowable.

In a related aspect of the invention according to Claims 22, 45 and 49, if a communication error occurs when electronic mail data having image data attached is communicated, electronic mail is sent by attaching image data by the standards of an image defined by a Tagged Image File Format (TIFF). With this aspect, if the error occurs during the communication, the image data of the facsimile document is converted into a format that the partner is able to process, i.e., a format commonly used by facsimile machines (e.g., the most common resolution and/or paper size), and an e-mail is sent with the converted data. Thus, it can more readily assured that the receiving side can process the image data attached to the e-mail.

Referring specifically to the claims, independent Claim 22 is a communication apparatus comprising first communicating means for transmitting/receiving electronic mail data by connecting to the Internet, and means for sending electronic mail by attaching image data by the standards of an image defined by a Tagged Image File Format (TIFF), if a communication error occurs when the first communicating means communicates electronic mail data having image data attached.

Claims 45 and 49 are computer-readable medium and method claims, respectively, that substantially correspond to Claim 22.

The applied art, alone or in any permissible combination, is not seen to disclose or to suggest the features of Claims 22, 45 and 49. More particularly, the applied art is not seen to disclose or to suggest at least the feature of, if a communication error occurs when communicating electronic mail data having image data attached, sending electronic mail by attaching image data by the standards of an image defined by a Tagged Image File Format (TIFF).

Joffe is not seen to disclose any specifics of the format of image data when errors in communication of the e-mail message are handled, other than attempting a retransmission of the original message. In this regard, the Office Action alleges that Joffe's column 4, lines 13 to 67 and column 6, line 65 to column 8, line 26 explains sending an email to a fax machine and the possibility of a failed transmission with re-sending of the email. Thus, while Joffe may resend an email when an error occurs, nothing has been found in Joffe which discloses that, if a communication error occurs, an electronic mail is sent by attaching image data by the standards of an image defined by a Tagged Image File

Format (TIFF). Accordingly, Joffe is not seen to disclose or to suggest the features of Claims 22, 45 and 49.

The Office Action asserts that the allegedly admitted prior art's disclosure, when combined with Joffe, teaches the features of Claims 22, 45 and 49. However, the allegedly admitted prior art merely states that conventional non-email type facsimile transmissions can be performed in a TIFF format, but discloses nothing about, if a communication error occurs when communicating electronic mail data having image data attached, sending an email communication by attaching image data by the standards of an image defined by a Tagged Image File Format (TIFF).

Seo has been studied, but is not seen to add anything that, when combined with Joffe or the allegedly admitted prior art, would have rendered the present invention obvious. More particular, any permissible combination of Joffe, the allegedly admitted prior art, and Seo is not seen to disclose or to suggest at least the feature of, if a communication error occurs when communicating electronic mail data having image data attached, sending an email communication by attaching image data by the standards of an image defined by a Tagged Image File Format (TIFF).

In view of the foregoing, Claims 22, 45 and 49, as well as the claims dependent therefrom, are believed to be allowable.

In another related aspect of the invention according to Claims 23, 46, 50, 71, 81 and 85, a user can designate the image format, whereby functional information, which is functional information for a facsimile defined by a Tagged Image File Format (TIFF), of the other party, is requested pertaining to the designated format, but no request is made if the designated format is an image format defined by the TIFF. With this aspect, if

the user designates a format other than TIFF for the image data to be attached to the e-mail, then the functional information of the receiving machine is requested by attaching a TIFF file that includes the functional information to an email.

Referring specifically to the claims, Claim 23 is a communication apparatus comprising first communicating means for transmitting/receiving electronic mail data by connecting to the Internet, means for designating an image format including a resolution of image data, and means for requesting functional information, which is functional information for a facsimile defined by a Tagged Image File Format (TIFF), pertaining to the designated image format, of another party, wherein functional information of the other party is not requested if the designated image format is an image format defined by the TIFF.

Claims 46 and 50 are computer-readable medium and method claims, respectively, that substantially correspond to Claim 23.

Claim 71 is along the lines of Claim 23, but is more specifically a communication apparatus comprising first communicating means for transmitting/receiving electronic mail data by connecting to the Internet, means for designating an image format including a resolution of image data, and means for requesting functional information, which is functional information for a facsimile defined by a Tagged Image File Format (TIFF), pertaining to the designated image format, of a communication partner, wherein if functional information of the communication partner is known, the functional information of the communication partner is not requested.

Claims 81 and 85 are computer-readable medium and method claims, respectively, that substantially correspond to Claim 71.

The applied art, alone or in any permissible combination, is not seen to disclose or to suggest the features of Claims 23, 46, 50, 71, 81 and 85. More particularly, the applied art is not seen to disclose or to suggest at least the feature of requesting functional information, which is functional information for a facsimile defined by a Tagged Image File Format (TIFF), pertaining to a designated image format, of another party (communication partner), wherein functional information of the other party (communication partner) is not requested if the designated image format is an image format defined by TIFF, or if the functional information of the communication partner is known.

As discussed above with regard to Claim 1, neither Joffe or the allegedly admitted prior art are seen to disclose or to suggest the foregoing features. Moreover, Miller has been studied but is merely seen to disclose sending an email that is converted into a fax document and is sent to a fax number that is looked-up in a database. However, Miller, like Joffe and the allegedly admitted prior art, is not seen to disclose or to suggest at least the feature of requesting functional information, which is functional information for a facsimile defined by a Tagged Image File Format (TIFF), pertaining to a designated image format, of another party (communication partner), wherein functional information of the other party (communication partner) is not requested if the designated image format is an image format defined by TIFF, or if the functional information of the communication partner is known.

Accordingly, Claims 23, 46, 50, 71, 81 and 85, as well as the claims dependent therefrom, are also believed to be allowable.

In another related aspect of the invention according to Claims 24 and 47, when electronic mail data having image data attached is to be communicated over the

Internet, electronic mail concerning pieces of functional information, which is functional information for a facsimile defined by a Tagged Image File Format (TIFF), pertaining to the same process, electronic mail of a text, and electronic mail concerning delivery confirmation, are related to each other. As a result, the information can be maintained in a database as related information.

With specific reference to the claims, Claim 24 is a communication apparatus comprising first communicating means for transmitting/receiving electronic mail data by connecting to the Internet, and an identifier for relating pieces of electronic mail concerning pieces of functional information, which is functional information for a facsimile defined by a Tagged Image File Format (TIFF), pertaining to the same process to each other, when the first communicating means is to communicate electronic mail data having image data attached.

Claim 47 is a computer-readable medium claim that substantially corresponds to Claim 24.

The applied art, alone or in any permissible combination, is not seen to disclose or to suggest the features of Claims 24 and 47, and in particular, is not seen to disclose or to suggest at least the feature of, when electronic mail data having image data attached is to be communicated, relating electronic mail concerning pieces of functional information, which is functional information for a facsimile defined by a Tagged Image File Format (TIFF), pertaining to the same process, electronic mail of a text, and electronic mail concerning delivery confirmation, to each other.

Joffe is not seen to disclose anything with regard to relating pieces of e-mail to each other, much less relating electronic mail concerning pieces of functional

information, which is functional information for a facsimile defined by a Tagged Image File Format (TIFF), pertaining to the same process, electronic mail of a text, and electronic mail concerning delivery confirmation, to each other when electronic mail data having image data attached is to be communicated.

The allegedly admitted prior art also fails to disclose anything with regard to relating the claimed pieces of information. However, the Office Action alleges that Miller and Joffe utilize the utility of confirmations and acknowledgments, which is somehow equated with the claimed language regarding relating pieces of information. In Applicant's view however, nothing in Miller or Joffe relate pieces of email information, much less relating pieces of e-mail to each other, much less relating electronic mail concerning pieces of functional information, which is functional information for a facsimile defined by a Tagged Image File Format (TIFF), pertaining to the same process, electronic mail of a text, and electronic mail concerning delivery confirmation, to each other when electronic mail data having image data attached is to be communicated.

Thus, Claims 24 and 47, as well as the claims dependent therefrom, are also believed to be allowable.

In another related aspect according to Claims 53, 56, 58 and 59, delivery confirmation information is received when electronic mail data having image data attached is communicated, and a communication result report is output which indicates one of information representing that communication of image information is successful, information representing that communication of image information has failed, information representing that a communication result of image information is unverified, and information representing that the electronic mail data has been communicated by attaching

image data by the standard defined by Tagged Image File Format (TIFF). As a result, the transmitting device can know whether the image data was formatted in a form that the receiving device can successfully process.

Referring specifically to the claims, Claim 53 is a communication apparatus comprising first connecting means for connecting to a local area network and/or second connecting means for connecting to a wide area network, first communicating means for transmitting/receiving electronic mail data by connecting to the Internet by one of the first and second connecting means, and means for receiving information on delivery confirmation by the first communicating means, wherein when the first communicating means communicates electronic mail data having image data attached, a communication result report is output which indicates one of information representing that communication of image information is successful, information representing that communication of image information has failed, information representing that a communication result of image information is unverified, and information representing that the electronic mail data has been communicated by attaching image data by the standard defined by Tagged Image File Format (TIFF).

Claims 58 and 59 are method and system claims, respectively, that substantially correspond to Claim 53.

Claim 56 includes features along the lines of Claim 53, but is more specifically directed to a communication apparatus comprising first communicating means for transmitting/receiving electronic mail data by connecting to the Internet, and second communicating means for performing facsimile communication by connecting to a wide area network, wherein when the first communicating means communicates electronic mail

data having image data attached, a communication result report is output which indicates one of information representing that communication of image information is successful, information representing that communication of image information has failed, information representing that a communication result of image information is unverified, and information representing that the electronic mail data has been communicated by attaching image data by the standard defined by Tagged Image File Format (TIFF), and, when the second communicating means performs communication, a communication result report indicating one of information representing that communication of image information is successful and information representing that communication of image information has failed is output.

The applied art, alone or in any permissible combination, is not seen to disclose or to suggest the features of Claims 53, 56, 58 and 59. More particularly, the applied art is not seen to disclose or to suggest at least the feature of, when electronic mail data having image data attached is communicated, a communication result report is output which indicates one of information representing that communication of image information is successful, information representing that communication of image information has failed, information representing that a communication result of image information is unverified, and information representing that the electronic mail data has been communicated by attaching image data by the standard defined by Tagged Image File Format (TIFF).

Joffe is merely seen to disclose that, when an e-mail is sent to the router, a determination is made whether the fax pages were successfully converted and transmitted by the router to the facsimile machine. If so, then the process simply ends (column 10, line

10-11). If the transmission is not successful, then the e-mail is resent. However, Joffe is not seen to disclose anything with regard to outputting a communication result report when the e-mail is sent, much less that the report includes one of information representing that communication of image information is successful, information representing that communication of image information has failed, information representing that a communication result of image information is unverified, and information representing that the electronic mail data has been communicated by attaching image data by the standard defined by Tagged Image File Format (TIFF).

The allegedly admitted prior art provides nothing regarding outputting communication result report, much less a report that includes one of the foregoing features.

Likewise, Miller is merely seen to disclose that an acknowledgment fax or an acknowledgment e-mail are sent to acknowledge transmission of the fax or the e-mail. However, Applicant fails to see anything in Miller in which a communication result report is output when the e-mail (or fax) is sent, much less that the report includes one of information representing that communication of image information is successful, information representing that communication of image information has failed, information representing that a communication result of image information is unverified, and information representing that the electronic mail data has been communicated by attaching image data by the standard defined by Tagged Image File Format (TIFF).

Accordingly, Claims 53, 56, 58 and 59, as well as the claims dependent therefrom, are believed to be allowable.

In yet another related aspect of the invention according to Claims 61, 68, 72, 73 and 79, information pertaining to functional information, which is functional

information for a facsimile defined by a Tagged Image File Format (TIFF), is held in a database so that, when electronic mail data having image data attached is to be communicated, the transmitting device can determine an appropriate format to convert the attached image data into by referring to the TIFF functional information of the receiving device held in the database.

Referring specifically to the claims, Claim 61 is a communication apparatus comprising first connecting means for connecting to a local area network and/or second connecting means for connecting to a wide area network, first communicating means for transmitting/receiving electronic mail data by connecting to the Internet by one of the first and second connecting means, and a database for holding information pertaining to functional information, which is functional information for a facsimile defined by a Tagged Image File Format (TIFF), wherein the first communicating means communicates electronic mail data having image data attached.

Claim 72 includes features along the lines of Claim 61, but more specifically is a communication apparatus comprising first communicating means for transmitting/receiving electronic mail data by connecting to the Internet, second communicating means for performing facsimile communication by connecting to a wide area network, and a database for holding information concerning functional information, which is functional information for a facsimile defined by a Tagged Image File Format (TIFF), wherein the first communicating means communicates electronic mail data having image data attached.

Claim 73 is a computer-readable medium claim that substantially corresponds to Claim 72.

Claim 68 also includes features along the lines of Claim 61, but more specifically is a communication system comprising a plurality of communication apparatuses each of which comprises, first connecting means for connecting to a local area network and/or second connecting means for connecting to a wide area network, first communicating means for transmitting/receiving electronic mail data by connecting to the Internet by one of the first and second connecting means, and a database for holding information concerning functional information, which is functional information for a facsimile defined by a Tagged Image File Format (TIFF), wherein each apparatus communicates electronic mail data having image data attached by the first communicating means, wherein on the basis of information about broadcast of a database pertaining to the functional information from an electronic mail server to which the plurality of communication apparatuses are connected and which distributes electronic mail data to the plurality of communication apparatuses, the database of each communication apparatus is updated to allow the plurality of communication apparatuses to share the contents of the databases.

Claim 79 is a system claim that substantially corresponds to Claim 68.

The applied art, alone or in any permissible combination, is not seen to disclose or to suggest the features of Claims 61, 68, 72, 73 and 79, and in particular, is not seen to disclose or to suggest at least the feature of a database that holds information pertaining to functional information, which is functional information for a facsimile defined by a Tagged Image File Format (TIFF).

As discussed above, neither Joffe or the allegedly admitted prior art are seen to disclose or to suggest anything with regard to functional information for a facsimile

defined by TIFF. Accordingly, Joffe and the allegedly admitted prior art are also not seen to disclose or to suggest a database holding information pertaining to functional information, which is functional information for a facsimile defined by a Tagged Image File Format (TIFF).

Miller is also not seen to disclose or to suggest at least the feature of holding, in a database, information pertaining to functional information, which is functional information for a facsimile defined by a Tagged Image File Format (TIFF).

In view of the foregoing, Claims 61, 68, 72, 73 and 79, as well as the claims dependent therefrom, are believed to be allowable.

In another related aspect, Claim 86 is a communication method of transmitting/receiving electronic mail data by connecting to the Internet, comprising the steps of performing communication pertaining to functional information, which is functional information for a facsimile defined by a Tagged Image File Format (TIFF), when a mail address is registered in an electronic mail address registration function, with a communication partner apparatus registered in the electronic mail address registration function, and registering or updating the functional information with respect to an item, corresponding to the registered electronic mail address, in a database.

The applied art, alone or in any permissible combination, is not seen to disclose or to suggest the features of Claim 86, and in particular, is not seen to disclose or to suggest at least the feature of performing communication pertaining to functional information, which is functional information for a facsimile defined by a Tagged Image File Format (TIFF).

Again, as stated above, neither Joffe or the allegedly admitted prior art are seen to disclose anything with regard to performing communication pertaining to functional information, which is functional information for a facsimile defined by a Tagged Image File Format (TIFF). Accordingly, Claim 86 is believed to be allowable.

Seo and Wolf, which were applied against various dependent claims, have been studied but are not seen to add anything to overcome the deficiencies of Joffe, the allegedly admitted prior art, or Miller, with regard to any of the foregoing features of independent Claims 1, 2, 22 to 25, 45 to 47, 49 to 53, 56, 58, 59, 61, 68, 71 to 73, 79, 81, 85 and 86.

In view of the foregoing deficiencies of the applied art, all of Claims 1, 2, 22 to 25, 45 to 47, 49 to 53, 56, 58, 59, 61, 68, 71 to 73, 79, 81, 85 and 86, as well as the claims dependent therefrom, are believed to be allowable.

As a formal matter, Applicant notes that he has now received two Office Actions in the above-identified application, but to date, no indication of acknowledgment of Applicant's Claim To Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119, which was filed on February 12, 2001, has been provided. Applicant filed a Request For Acknowledgment Of Claim To Priority on November 5, 2003, which provided evidence of the February 12, 2001 filing, but the April 28, 2004 Office Action did not respond to Applicant's request. Accordingly, it is again respectfully requested that the Examiner formally acknowledge Applicant's claim for priority and receipt of the certified copies of the Japanese priority applications.

No other matters having been raised, the entire application is believed to be in condition for allowance and such action is respectfully requested at the Examiner's earliest convenience.

Applicant's undersigned attorney may be reached in our Costa Mesa, California office at (714) 540-8700. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our below-listed address.

Respectfully submitted,



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